

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

Claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Saatweber et al., claims 13 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saatweber et al., claims 14-23, 25, 28, 30 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Saatweber et al. in view of Watanabe et al., and claim 24 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

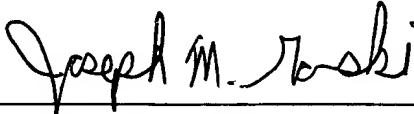
Accordingly, without acquiescing to the appropriateness of the prior art rejections issued by the Examiner, and solely to further advance prosecution of this application, the subject matter of allowable claim 24, and intervening claim 18, has been incorporated into claim 11. Also, claims 26 and 28 have been amended so as to correct their dependencies, and claims 12-24 have been cancelled.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance, with the allowed claims being 11 and 25-31, and an early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner believes that any issues remain which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative by telephone to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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